

Kornblith says he is envoy of Messiah

TEL AVIV (AP) — An Israeli suspected of desecrating 250 Jewish graves told a court Tuesday he was innocent, but added that he was an envoy of the Messiah. "I am not a holy minister," David Goldfarb, a 32-year-old computer engineer, told reporters after denying spray-painting graves in Haifa. He said he was a preacher. Police said they believed Goldfarb and a friend, Uriel Levy, were inspired in the desecration of graves in two separate incidents. The graves were desecred with slogans including: "Save the Jews" and "Gentiles destroy Israel." The attack followed a highly publicized desecration of a Jewish cemetery in France. The Judge Rimonim of Haifa, who has not been formally charged, in custody for 15 days and set his short when he tried to explain his messianic mission, is in court, Israel radio said. Police say Goldfarb and his friend, who has not been named and will appear in court later, are mentally unbalanced. Police Commissioner Yoseph Terner said: "It's not final yet... but we have a strong suspicion that those in our hands are involved in the matter. We have other evidence that strengthens this suspicion."

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King visits RJ simulator centre

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday visited the Royal Jordanian's (RJ) simulator centre where he was briefed on the centre's progress and the services it offers in the field of training pilots. The King called for providing the best expertise to pilots both from the RJ and other airlines. King Hussein wished this national institution every success. The meeting was attended by Prime Minister Mudar Badran, Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, the RJ board chairman and its executive director.

Bhutto in Iran

NICOSIA (AP) — Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan arrived in Tehran Tuesday and called for expansion of "historical and friendly" ties with Iran, the state news agency reported. The Islamic Republic News Agency said she was met at the airport upon arrival from the Iranian holy city of Mashhad by First Vice-President Hassan Habibi. It quoted him as saying he hoped that Bhutto's visit would portend "peace and friendship" in the region.

Nepal king gives in on power-sharing

KATHMANDU (R) — Nepal's King Birendra agreed Tuesday to dissolve a panel that threatened to move towards democracy and to share power with the interim government. Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai said Birendra met with a statement after talks with Bhattarai that the prime minister would recommend a new panel to draft a constitution and the government should act to repeal or amend laws to help it operate in a multi-party democracy. "I am very happy with the result. It must solve the present crisis," Bhattarai told reporters, handing them statements outlining his agreement with the monarch.

Oman locust situation contained

MUSCAT (AP) — Agriculture fieldworkers battling locust swarms in northern Oman said Tuesday that the outbreak remained confined and did not pose a threat to vegetation in neighbouring United Arab Emirates (UAE). Wind patterns would tend to move swarms towards Iran and Pakistan and not into the UAE, State Agriculture Research Department Director Tark Zedgaly said in a telephone interview with the Associated Press. He was speaking from Muscat on the locust-attacked Batinah coast, 112 kilometres northwest of the capital Muscat. The locust incident in Oman was the first this year on the Arabian peninsula.

Bashir sends message to Assad

DAMASCUS (R) — Sudan's Interior Minister Faisal Abu Saleh arrived in Damascus with a message for President Hafez Al Assad from Sudaneese leader Omar Hassan Al Bashir, officials said Tuesday. Diplomats said his talk was expected to cover an Arab summit in Baghdad May 28. Sudan is one of at least 19 Arab League members to declare support for the meeting.

Mayor charged with ordering demolition of mosque in France

LYON (AP) — A small-town mayor has been charged with interfering with religious freedom by ordering the demolition of a wing of an abandoned factory that was being used as a mosque. Gerard Desezempe, mayor of Charvieu-Chavagneux in eastern France, maintained his innocence during Monday's court hearing in Lyon. He said he assigned a bulldozer to demolish the north wing of the building, and that it accidentally razed the south wing.

Bashir also was expected to protest what Arab countries view as unjustified U.S. and British attacks on Iraq for its alleged attempts to develop nuclear weapons.

Praising Tunisia as an intermediary between Arab countries and the West, Bush said, "Five people were sleeping in the wing when the bulldozer arrived last August 16 at 7 a.m. and began the demolition. One of the occupants was slightly wounded. The local Muslim community accused Desezempe of racism and rejected his claim that the demolition was accidental."

Jawara ends visit affirming support for Palestinians

AMMAN (J.T.) — Gambian President Dawda Jawara left Amman Tuesday after a three-day visit reaffirming the support of his country as well as the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) for the Arab call for an international peace conference on the Middle East.

Gambia and the OAU support a just and durable solution to the Palestinian problem and believe that an international peace conference held under the auspices of the United Nations can lead to such a solution, Jawara told Jordan Television in a pre-departure interview.

Most African countries, and the OAU in particular, support the Palestinian cause and believe that an international peace conference held under the auspices of the United Nations can lead to such a solution, Jawara told Jordan Television in a pre-departure interview.

The two countries do not have diplomatic ties and earlier reports said an announcement of formal relations could come during Jawara's visit, which, according to Petra, "allowed for building strong future ties."

The Gambian president, who was accompanied by his wife and a high-level official delegation, toured a number of archaeological and touristic sites and visited universities and hospitals.

The Gambian president was seen off upon his departure Tuesday by King Hussein, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Mudar Badran and high-ranking officials.

Gorbachev, Mubarak condemn settlements

MOSCOW (Agencies) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev Tuesday signed a declaration condemning the settlement of Soviet Jews in the occupied territories.

In an historic visit that ended 18 years of strained relations, Mubarak met Gorbachev for 90 minutes in the Kremlin before the two leaders signed the document.

It said Palestinians should choose their own destiny and desecrate the Israeli occupation of Arab Jerusalem as illegal and a dangerous obstacle to peace.

The two leaders also called for an international peace conference under United Nations auspices to discuss the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The declaration sealed diplomatic ties which were soured when former President Anwar Sadat turned to the West in the 1970s.

In September 1981, a month before he was assassinated by religious zealots, Sadat broke off ties with Moscow and accused it of plotting against the Egyptian state.

"The meeting was important

considering the Soviet Union's increasing role on the international stage and Egypt's leadership role in the Middle East," an Egyptian diplomat said.

The Egyptian president has been invited to address the Supreme Soviet, the country's parliament, Wednesday. He would be the first foreign leader ever to do so.

Protests in Estonia, Latvia

VILNIUS (Agencies) — Demonstrators tore down Estonia's flag and thousands of Soviet soldiers tried to break into the Latvian parliament Tuesday in protests against the Baltic republics' independence campaign.

Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis, in a radio interview broadcast as U.S. Secretary of State James Baker flew to Moscow for an arms summit, appealed to the Americans to raise the issue of Baltic independence with Soviet leaders.

A pro-Moscow crowd in the Estonian capital of Tallinn advanced on the 14th century Toompea Palace and tore down the republic's blue, white and black flag, which was raised last week when lawmakers voted for independence, witnesses said.

The anti-independence protesters briefly raised the Soviet Union's red hammer-and-sickle flag over the legislature.

But Estonian Prime Minister Edgar Savisaar delivered a live radio address urging pro-independence forces to converge on the palace. They needed his call and restored the Estonian flag, the witnesses said.

On a warm spring day, Ben Ali was treated to the pomp and ceremony of a formal welcome to the White House, with military bands and colourful honour guards on the South Lawn.

The Tunisian leader planned to meet Bush for debt relief and to express the Arab World's alarm over growing Soviet immigration to Israel.

He said Tunisia's record is impressive in other areas, as well, since it has the highest literacy rate in North Africa and consistently has honoured its debt obligations.

Ben Ali thanked Bush for U.S. assistance over the years.

"We are pleased to say that we are committed as firmly as you are to the ideals of democracy, human rights and free market economy, for such are our fundamental choices," Ben Ali said.

"And we are confident that you will continue supporting and strengthening these options," he said.

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"Five people were sleeping in the wing when the bulldozer arrived last August 16 at 7 a.m. and began the demolition. One of the occupants was slightly wounded. The local Muslim community accused Desezempe of racism and rejected his claim that the demolition was accidental."

Ben Ali, who arrived here Monday for a three-day state visit, has a busy schedule including meetings with administration officials, lawmakers, leaders of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, and a gala White House dinner.



His Majesty King Hussein and Gambian President Dawda Jawara inspect a guard of honour mounted

Tuesday upon the departure of the Gambian leader after a three-day state visit (Petra photo).

4 Palestinians killed as strike marks Israel creation

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — The bodies of three Palestinians, including a village leader who was stabbed to death, were found in the occupied West Bank Tuesday. A 14-year-old Palestinian also died of wounds after being shot earlier by a Jewish settler.

She said the settlers stoned houses in the villages of Ayzaria and Issawiya outside Jerusalem. The army clamped a curfew on Ayzaria, a frequent ambush spot where a Jewish taxi driver was stoned and injured Monday night.

Jewish settlers rampaged through Arab neighbourhoods in the Jerusalem area early Tuesday morning, smashing car and house windows, after Palestinians fired an Israeli bus.

Settlers from Maale Adumim, a West Bank dormitory town perched on hills just outside Jerusalem, attacked Arab motorists after a petrol bomb hit a bus on the road to their settlement. One settler was arrested, police said.

"Several groups of Maale Adumim residents went wild. They stoned Arab homes near the road to Jerusalem, tried to yank Arabs out of their cars and disrupted traffic," a police spokeswoman told Reuters.

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U.K. experts link Frankfurt customs seizure to Iraqi gun

FRANKFURT (R) — British military experts say machine parts seized at Frankfurt airport are probably part of a planned Iraqi cannon, a spokesman for the Frankfurt customs office said Tuesday.

Experts from Britain's Ministry of Defence had examined some of the shipment and discovered they matched other parts seized in Britain. "It is clear that the parts fit together exactly," the spokesman said.

Malik Radif Al Ubaidi, counselor at the Iraqi embassy in Bonn said he had no details of the goods seized at Frankfurt airport in April.

But he added: "The parts that have been seized in London, in Turkey and now in West Germany are not parts of a supergun, but for the petrochemical industry."

The seizures will continue the debate on whether Iraq is building a giant 40-metre (120 foot) cannon, capable of reaching targets as far away as Israel, Iran or Syria.

In the last month officials have confiscated steel pipes and other parts in Britain, Italy, Turkey and Greece. Defence experts say the parts probably form part of a giant gun.

Iraq has continually denied it is building a cannon, saying items seized were to be used in the oil industry.

Iraqi Foreign Minister Tareq

build a supergun in Iraq," the spokesman said.

At the West German State Prosecutor's office, a spokesman said investigations into the customs' seizure were under way and likely to last for some time.

Investigations centred on possible breach of West German restrictions on arms exports.

West German law prevents the export of arms to war zones, although members of the opposition Social Democratic Party have claimed such export rules are frequently breached.

The spokesman said he could not rule out that some parts were made in West Germany.

The 17 crates of machine tools seized in Frankfurt weighed in at 37 tonnes and were destined for Baghdad. Pictures of one item show a large dull pipe about four metres long with a diameter of about 60 centimetres.

The crates came from Belgium and Switzerland and had been described to customs as oil industry equipment.

The spokesman said parts seized by West German customs included hydraulic pumps. Although these could be used for other purposes, investigators were certain they were parts of a giant gun.

"Looking at the measurements and the criteria we already have, at the end of the day they (the parts) are obviously designed to

state-owned steelmaker of alleged components for an Iraqi "super gun" capable of firing nuclear or chemical weapons.

Prosecutors said an Italian is being questioned on suspicion of illegal arms trafficking in the

"super gun" capable of firing nuclear or chemical weapons.

Authorities last week announced the seizure of nearly 100 tons of steel tubing and other parts about to be shipped out of Italy to Baghdad.

The Italian Foreign Ministry said only that Italian Foreign Minister Gianni de Michelis met with Aziz but did not say what they discussed.

Nearly all the seized components came from a foundry in the Umbrian city of Terni that is part of Ilva Spa, a state-owned company that is the world's fifth-largest steelmaker.

Meanwhile Britain's ambassador to Iraq, recalled in March in protest at the execution of British-based journalist Farzad Bazoft, will return to Baghdad this week, the Foreign Office said Tuesday.

Relations between the two countries suffered a severe blow after Britain condemned the execution of Iranian-born Bazoft as "barbaric" and summoned Ambassador Harold Walker for consultation.

Britain's response prompted mass anti-British demonstrations outside its embassy in Baghdad.

Democracy march shows new force in Algeria

By Philip Shehadi
Reuter

ALGIERS — Tens of thousands of Algerians who joined a pro-democracy march in the capital last Thursday showed the limits of Muslim fundamentalism in Algeria but they have yet to coalesce into an effective political force.

A loose coalition of moderate and leftist parties organised the nationwide march, mobilising large numbers of Algerians from all walks of life.

Political analysts said the impressive showing could foreshadow the emergence of what Algeria's fledgling multi-party democracy now lacks — a credible liberal successor to the widely discredited ruling party, the National Liberation Front (FLN).

A month ahead of the first free elections, the march showed that vast numbers of Algerians do not accept the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) as the only alternative to the FLN after 27 years of one-party rule.

But the pro-democracy forces still needed to define common objectives and project a compelling vision of Algeria's future, the analysts said.

"The alternative to the FIS has not yet coalesced. What the pro-democracy forces need to do is to organise themselves into a party and give Algerians a real alternative to both the FLN and the FIS," said one senior Western diplomat.

"It's one thing to turn people out on the streets, and another to organise a coherent political force," he said.

By most counts the four organising parties succeeded in surpassing the 50,000 to 60,000 FIS supporters that marched on the presidential palace last month.

The pro-democracy march impressed observers not only by its numbers — more than 100,000 by most independent accounts — but by the breadth of support.

While the FIS march was

dominated by the crisis-hit young urban poor, the pro-democracy marchers appeared more representative of Algerian society — grouping middle-class professionals, non-Arab Berbers and women alarmed by the rise of fundamentalism as well as unemployed youth.

"The silent majority has spoken" proclaimed state media that loudly supported the event.

But the non-fundamentalist opposition remains deeply divided and some major parties — such as the Socialist Forces Front (SFS) of revolutionary war hero Hocine Ait Ahmad — refused to take part. The FFS has its own march set for May 31.

Analysts said the FIS was now under increasing pressure to moderate its vision of Islam to counter widespread belief that it opposes political pluralism and social tolerance.

A series of attacks by Muslim extremists on women and entertainment venues deemed offensive to Islam during the recent holy month of Ramadan led many Algerians to equate the FIS with violence — a charge it bitterly rejects.

In a first response, the fiery young FIS preacher Ali Benhadj told a Friday prayer sermon the fundamentalists would pursue their goal on an Islamic state even if blood had to be spilled.

"The road toward an Islamic state is marked with tears and blood," he told several thousand supporters at the capital's Al Senna Mosque.

"Women were shouting in the streets for a free and democratic Algeria," Benhadj said, referring to a large contingent of feminists in the pro-democracy march. "We say: Algeria can only be Islamic."

President Chadli Benjedid joined a chorus of criticism of fundamentalist thought from Islamic scholars at a conference in Algiers last week, saying Islam and politics should not mix.

Irish envoy appeals for release of Keenan

BEIRUT (Agencies) — Irish Ambassador Antoine Mac Unrao appealed Tuesday to the kidnappers of hostage Brian Keenan to release him and all other hostages out of humanitarian considerations.

"Mr. Keenan does not belong to an imperialist country. He comes from a poor and small country that had its share of war," Mac Unrao said at a news conference at the Irish consulate in west Beirut.

"I appeal to those who hold Mr. Brian Keenan to release him and other hostages in the name of humanity," said the ambassador, who is resident in Iraq and accredited to Lebanon, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait and Cyprus.

Mac Unrao flew to Beirut Monday to try to obtain new information on Keenan's welfare. He said he was on a fact-finding visit following the recent release of two American hostages, "and not prompted by any new developments on Mr. Keenan's fate."

Keenan, 39, of Belfast in British-ruled Northern Ireland, was an English teacher at the American University in Beirut when kidnapped on April 11, 1986. He also holds British nationality.

No group has claimed his abduction.

"We are in this mood that all hostages will be released. We call on all those who can influence the holders to maintain their efforts so that all hostages are freed," Mac Unrao said.

The ambassador said he had only met with Sheikh Hussein Fadallah, "with whom I find discussions on all matters very interesting."

Fadallah is the spiritual guide of the pro-Iranian Hezbollah, or Party of God, believed umbrella for hostage-holding cells.

Mac Unrao said he has no plans to meet with Hussein Musawi, reputed mentor of Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine. The group released professor Robert Polhill, 55, a

New Yorker, after 39 months of captivity on April 22.

Another group calling itself the Organisation of Islamic Dawn freed American hostage Frank Herbert Reed, 57, of Malden, Massachusetts, eight days later.

Reed brought the first word about Keenan's welfare, saying he had spent most of his captivity with the Irishman and British journalist John McCarthy.

McCarthy, a television journalist, was kidnapped on April 17, 1986. No group has claimed him.

The 16 Westerners held in Lebanon are six Americans, four Britons, two West Germans, two Swiss, an Irishman and an Italian.

Now, as Israel's military machine relentlessly grinds down the 30-month old Palestinian intifada, or uprising, in the occupied Arab lands, Langer has decided to quit. She has closed her Jerusalem office, packed her thousands of files and retreated to the modest apartment she shares with her husband in a drab Tel Aviv high-rise.

"I want my quitting to be a sort of demonstration and expression of my despair and disgust with the system, and maybe as a proof that something must be done to grant protection to the Palestinians in the occupied territories," she said, which has worsened about a month ago, when he was treated by a doctor from Beirut's American University Hospital.

One source said an end to the plight of all Western hostages, including six Americans and three Britons, was near. He said Washington and Tehran were holding direct talks on the issue.

"Waite is being held in acceptable conditions in the southern suburbs (of Beirut) and is receiving regular medical attention," he said.

The sources, close to the groups holding Waite, 51, and 14 other Westerners in Lebanon, would not say what Waite suffered from. They said he had had "several health problems."

"Two Iranian doctors attend regularly to him but around a month ago his condition deteriorated and a Lebanese doctor from the American Hospital in Beirut treated him and he has recovered," one source said.

Earlier Monday Perez de Cuelar met a representative of Polari guerrillas fighting for independence in the Western Sahara. No details of the meeting emerged.

Azziz indicated Monday that

Waite is well after illness.

Meanwhile, pro-Iranian sources said in Beirut Tuesday Terry Waite is alive and well after 40 months as a hostage in Lebanon and has recovered from a recent illness.

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Arab-Americans 'become' political force in U.S.

From the Washington Post and the Washington Times

of more than 200 Arab-Americans.

WASHINGTON — A bipartisan group of Arab-American congressmen, state lawmakers, mayors and party officials from around the country proclaimed their arrival as a political force in American politics over the weekend.

"This is the first time I've met with an Arab-American group to hear its point of view in the two years I've been with the Bush administration," a White House official said.

"We met 15 times with the leaders of the other (pro-Israel) side in the last month," the official said, according to conference sources.

"When we have national pundits coming to our conference, we know we've arrived," James Zogby, executive director of Arab American Institute, said at a banquet honouring author and human rights spokesman Edward Said, former American Enterprise Institute Chairman William J. Baroody Jr. and former Takoma Park Mayor Sammie Abdul-

lah Abbott.

The "pundits" were New Republic senior editor Morton Kondracke and syndicated columnist Patrick J. Buchanan, who held a "crossfire" style debate at the conference luncheon Saturday.

Mr. Kondracke twice surprised the pro-Palestinian audience. "Sure, I think there should be a Palestinian state," he said, although he questioned the intentions of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) toward Israel.

In response to another question from the audience, Kon-

dracke said the New Republic is "widely regarded as a Zionist publication — and correctly so."

Buchanan, asked what had prompted him to move from a strongly pro-Israel position while an official in the Reagan White House to the pro-Palestinian organisation expressed in his columns, cited the "intifada," the Palestinian uprising in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

National leaders from the Democratic and Republican parties have encouraged Arab American political activists more involved in the national political process.

"I wanted to come here and be with you to say that our hearts are open, that our minds are open," Brown told the nearly 200 Arab Americans attending a three-day leadership conference.

"This was not the case in days past," said Zogby. "Then the message was: 'We can't afford your involvement; it's too risky.'"

Rollins urged the group to find positive ways to communicate its message. "To have political effectiveness, you can't labour under negative stereotypes," he said, noting that much of "the focus is on your radical side." Correcting that misrepresentation, Rollins said, is as important as tactical matters.

Arab-American conference discusses problems, aspirations

WASHINGTON (USIA) — The Arab American Institute (AAI) held its fifth annual leadership conference here on May 10-12, attracting more than 200 Arab-American leaders from 26 states for a weekend of briefings, seminars and workshops devoted to the Arab-American community's problems and aspirations.

With "Campaign 90: Year of Challenge and Change" as its theme, the conference also brought together 19 Arab-American elected officials, leaders of 12 national Arab-American organisations, and parliamentarians from three Arab countries.

The conference programme included discussions of political action, the intifada, problems of American cities, and democracy in Arab countries. The latter subject was discussed by the three visiting Arab parliamentarians — Dr. Lila I. Takla of Egypt, Butros Ghali of Lebanon, and Laith F. Shubael of Jordan.

Conference participants also honoured the accomplishments of

Edward Said, human rights defender, author, professor of comparative literature and music critic, at its banquet on May 12. Said was recognised for his efforts in urging the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) to take a clear stand on recognising Israel's right to exist and in the drafting of the Palestinian declaration of independence.

In one of the conference sessions, commentators Morton Kondracke, senior editor of the "New Republic", and Patrick J. Buchanan, a syndicated columnist, debated the intifada and other Israeli-Palestinian issues.

Most of the conference, however, dealt with political action.

"Get involved in politics if you want to make a difference," was the overriding message that conference participants received.

Civil rights leader and former presidential candidate Jesse Jackson, addressing a dinner on May 11, called on Arab Americans to become even more forceful in

demanding recognition. He urged them to hold demonstrations and rallies much as the blacks had done in the 1960s "to challenge the conscience of the American public."

Democratic Party National Chairman Ron Brown addressed the AAI luncheon on May 11, saying the "arms, hearts, and minds" of his party are open to the Arab-American community. "Unity is important to victory," he said, adding, "I am counting on you to be active participants in the democracy of this nation."

Also speaking on behalf of the Democratic Party was Representative Mary Rose Oakar of Ohio. "By supporting members of our community and by sharing our political knowledge with other communities across America, we are building a better future and a stronger voice for Arab-Americans," she told conference participants at the same luncheon.

Azziz told reporters in Rome Monday that Iran had responded to the letter and Iraq viewed the exchange positively.

He did not disclose the contents of the exchange but denied press reports that the Iraqi message suggested that negotiations over border issues could begin from the Algeciras Accord — a 1975 pact which Hussein tore up shortly before the start of the 1980-88 war.

Rafsanjani said last week he saw some signs of goodwill in Iraq's attitude towards the peace negotiations.

Iraq denies clampdown on Mujahideen

BAGHDAD (R) — Baghdad denied Tuesday a Tehran newspaper report that it had clamped down on Iran's main opposition group, the Mujahideen Khalq, in Iraq.

The report, which was repeated by some news agencies, that the Iraqi government had put restrictions on Rajavi... is completely baseless," the official Iraqi News Agency (INA) quoted a "reliable source" as saying.

The Tehran report was also denied Monday by a Mujahideen spokesman in Baghdad in Bagdad, the headquarters of the group since its leaders were forced to leave

Home News

ACC labour ministers to discuss Arab workforce

AMMAN (J.T.) — Ministers of labour and social development in Jordan and the Kingdom's partners in the Arab Cooperation Council (ACC) opened a three-day meeting in Sanaa Tuesday to reach final agreement on matters related to employment of workers from the ACC group and social security for these workers as well as matters related to national labour markets.

Jordan had earlier announced plans to give priority in employment to workers from the ACC countries which, besides Jordan, group North Yemen, Iraq and Egypt, should the need arise for the "employment of non-Jordanians."

Minister of Labour Qaseem Obeidat, who arrived here for the

meeting, said the ACC constituted a united force which could later be joined by the other Arab countries in total unity, without which the Arab Nation cannot exist.

ACC Secretary-General Hilmi Naimar said the ministers would conclude an agreement on social security and reach a system for its implementation as well as a plan to allow any ACC country to employ workers from another member state, giving them priority over other Arab and foreign workers.

Naimar said the agreement in Sanaa will be an elaboration of a draft plan reached by the ACC heads of state at their Sanaa meeting in September 1989.

NATIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

IDB pledges support to Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jeddah-based Islamic Development Bank (IDB) pledged its support for the development plans in Jordan and stressed that the bank will finance the Jordanian exports to the countries of the Organization of Islamic Conference, according to Ali Qandil Shihadeh, head of the bank's export financing section. Shihadeh, now on a visit to Jordan, said the IDB has provided more than \$400 million to Jordan since 1977 to finance Jordan's oil imports, in addition to other types of assistance which Jordan received through other programmes of the bank. He pointed out that the bank had financed 58 export transactions, costing \$113.4 million during the past 33 months. The bank's contribution benefited 7 countries, including Jordan.

Euro-Arab symposium to be held in Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will take part in a meeting to be held at the Arab League headquarter in Tunis at the level of permanent representatives, to discuss preparations and perceptions of the Euro-Arab cultural symposium which will be held in Jordan in 1991.

GUVS to organise seminar

AMMAN (J.T.) — The General Union of Voluntary Societies (GUVS) in Jordan will organise a four-day special seminar on informational services to the handicapped persons in Jordan. An announcement said that the seminar, which will open at the Jordan Radio and Television Corporation building Saturday and last until Tuesday, will deal with a range of topics on providing better media and information services to the handicapped.

JEA to benefit from Kuwait loan

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet Tuesday announced its approval of a loan from the Kuwait-based Arab Economic and Social Fund to the Jordanian government. The JD 3.25 million loan will benefit the Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) to finance its expansion projects in the Kingdom.

Palestine envoy to Jordan opens exhibition

AMMAN (Petra) — Ambassador of the State of Palestine to Jordan Al Tayeb Abdul Rahim Tuesday inaugurated a plastic art exhibition by the artist Husni Abu Karim held at Alia Art Gallery. The exhibition include 29 plates telling the story of the ongoing Palestinian uprising in the occupied Arab territories.

Tafilah to begin project implementation

TAFILLEH (Petra) — The executive committee in charge of addressing the drought problem in Tafilah governorate held a meeting Tuesday under the chairmanship of Tafilah Governor Khalaf Muhammed to discuss several issues on method of work and priorities of work. The committee decided to start implementing a number of agricultural, water and road projects in the governorate as of the beginning of June. Projects include maintenance and improvement of water resources and springs, afforestation and construction works.

AMO warns melon growers

AMMAN (Petra) — The Agricultural Marketing Organisation (AMO) Tuesday issued a warning to water melon growers to refrain from harvesting melons before they are fully ripe. An AMO statement said that it takes up to 120 days for the melons to ripe and that each melon should not weigh less than kilograms before it is cut. The AMO statement said that cutting melons before their due time can cause a big loss for the national economy.

Week film to be held at Alia Art Gallery

AMMAN (Petra) — The Jordanian Plastic Artists Association holds the international films week May 23, in which France, Britain, Holland, West Germany and the Soviet Union will participate. The week will be held at Alia Art Gallery.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- * Exhibition of paintings and sculptures by five Jordanian artists at Abdill Hamed Shoman Foundation (10:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.)
- * Plastic art exhibition by Abir Abu Jdeib, Sama Al Bouri and Hadil Rassam at Yarmouk University.
- * Exhibition of original aerial photos by Jane Taylor at hotel Jordan Intercontinental (all photos are for sale in aid of the St. John Ophthalmic Hospital, Jerusalem).
- * Book exhibition at Mu'ta University.
- * Art exhibition by George Sarikis Kaplanian at the Goethe Institute.
- * Art exhibition by Ibtissam Al Turk at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- * Art exhibition by students of Nazareth Sisters School at the French Cultural Centre.
- * Art exhibition by Hamdi Abu Elrayan at the Alia Art Gallery.

FILM

- W Film "The Love Affair" at the British Council at 6:00 p.m.

CONFERENCES

- * Athletics medicine conference at the Royal Cultural Centre at 10:00 p.m.

The government should do more to reinstate dismissed employees'

AMMAN (J.T.) — Steps taken so far on the part of the government to reinstate employees fired from their posts on political grounds are not enough and more speedy efforts ought to be taken to find jobs for the dismissed civil servants in line with declared government policy, according to Ahmad Azzaideh, chairman of the Lower House of Parliament's Public Freedoms and Citizens Rights Committee.

"The Parliament hopes the CSC will take speedy steps to redress this awkward situation in line with government policies," Azzaideh said.

Prime Minister Mudar Badran earlier pledged that the government would re-employ all civil servants dismissed for political reasons.

According to government sources, 950 employees had been affected by previous government decisions denying them employment.

The Ministry of Education, for its part, announced plans to re-employ dismissed teachers and by the middle of last month a total of 191 teachers had been reinstated.

A Tuesday's meeting agreement was reached with the CSC, which takes charge of appointing

employees in various government offices, to supply the Parliament committee with a list of names of those dismissed including those who, so far, failed to apply for work at the CSC, according to the Jordan News Agency, Petra.

Prince said CSC also agreed to give priority to the people dismissed in filling vacancies in government departments. The agency said the CSC had agreed to take into account the period during which the dismissed persons were not in office so as to be considered as part of service when they calculate pensions.

Azzaideh called on all persons dismissed on political grounds to call at the CSC and apply for work. He also urged the CSC to try to find work for these people before the end of 1990.



His Royal Highness Prince Hassan Tuesday visits a pavilion at the construction materials fair held

at the Amman International Fair Centre in Majlis Al Hamam (Petra photo)

Construction materials fair highlights quality of products

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Tuesday visited an industrial fair displaying construction materials and praised the quality of products of 64 Jordanian firms and factories taking part in the fair.

Prince Hassan inspected all samples displayed a wide range of construction materials locally produced and was briefed on the volume of products that are marketed abroad after sufficing the local needs.

The winners will also be granted free return air tickets to India where they can also stay free of charge for a period of one week.

Prince Hassan said that some of the national construction products had already reached West Germany and according to officials many high quality goods are being sold in Arab states.

The industrial fair which ended Tuesday displayed samples of glass, cement, brick, wires and cables, metal pipes, paint, nails, radiators, boilers, solar heaters, marble tiles, fibre glass, doors and shutters.

Prince Hassan said the industrial businesses ought to coordinate their operations with the housing sector and concerned organisations so that the business of producing construction materials can continue.

The Jordanian Commercial Centres Corporation (JCCC) organised the fair in cooperation with the Housing Corporation, the Urban Development Department, the Royal Scientific Society and the Jordan Electricity Authority.

According to JCCC officials JD 15 million worth of local construction materials were sold to foreign countries in 1989, up from JD 8.2 million in 1988.

The construction industries in Jordan account for 13.2 per cent of the total national industry, and, according to the officials, they employ 12.4 per cent of the total national workforce.

Chinese delegation visits meteorology department

AMMAN (Petra) — A visiting delegation representing the Meteorology Department in China had a meeting here Tuesday with Dr. Ali Abada, director-general of the Department of Meteorology in Jordan and toured the department's centres in different parts of Jordan.

The department owns installations to help forecast the weather conditions in Deir Alla, Wadi Al Yabes Al Bagoura, Ras Munif, Duleil, Mafrqa, and Irbid.

The delegation members heard about outlining various aspects of meteorology work in Jordan

and later met with Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications Secretary-General Mohammad Smadi for further discussions.

The head of the delegation said China had put into space a satellite to help in the weather forecasting process and arrangements were underway to launch another satellite before the end of 1990.

The Chinese delegation Tuesday also toured archaeological and tourist sites in Jordan including the Greco-Roman city of Jerash.

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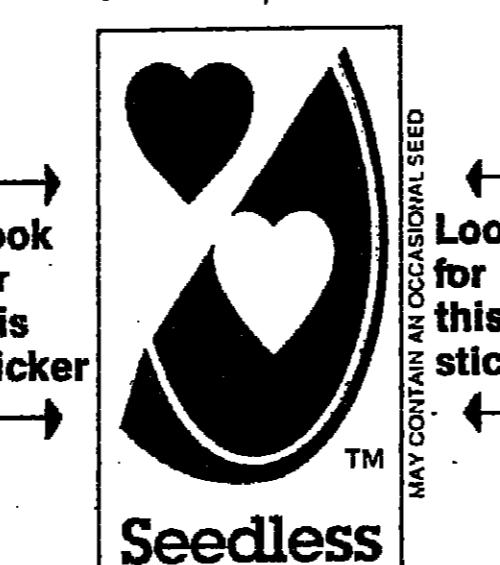
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WHICH IS TASTIER?

A seeded or a seedless Watermelon

NEW IN JORDAN

LOOK FOR THIS STICKER (in red and green)



Ask for seedless Watermelon from your local vegetable market.

Each seedless fruit bears the above sticker

Mobil

Taiwan plans to increase investment in Saudi Arabia

By Chen Chien-Kuo
Reuter

TAIPEI — Taiwan will boost its investment in Saudi Arabia in an attempt to strengthen its bilateral trade and diplomatic ties with Riyadh, the Industrial Development and Investment Centre said Tuesday.

Centre Director John Ni said Taiwan hoped the investment would reduce the impact of Saudi Arabia's decision to swap trade offices with China last year.

Saudi Arabia is the only country in the Middle East which recognises Taiwan's nationalist government.

He said Taiwan would encourage local public and private corporations to invest in Saudi Arabia, especially in those areas that could use Riyadh's cheaper labour and abundant supply of raw materials.

"Investment by Taiwan

businessmen in the kingdom would reap mutual benefits for both Taiwan and Saudi Arabia," he said in an interview.

Ni said Saudi Arabia is an ideal place for investment for Taiwan manufacturers of petrochemicals and chemicals, who are facing rising wages, a labour shortage and skyrocketing land prices at home.

The state-owned Taiwan Fertiliser Company has a joint venture urea plant with the Saudi Basic Industries Corporation in Jubail, more than 100 kilometres north of Dhahran, he said.

The 350 million U.S. dollar plant, capable of producing between 600,000 and 630,000 tonnes of urea a year, has been operating successfully since 1984.

A company official said Taiwan fertiliser was making a feasibility study for the establishment of two to three joint venture chemical

plants in the kingdom.

Another state-owned firm, the China Steel Corporation, also plans to set up a joint venture aluminium plant in Saudi Arabia. A company official said a proposal for the venture, capable of producing 210,000 tonnes of aluminium a year, is now before the cabinet for final approval. He declined to give investment figures.

Taiwan's daily oil imports from Saudi Arabia account for about 150,000 barrels or 35 per cent of its total needs.

Its two-way trade with Saudi Arabia rose to 1.94 billion U.S. dollars in 1989 from 1.87 billion in 1988, according to official figures.

"Increasing our investment in Saudi Arabia will help to boost two-way trade between Taiwan and the kingdom," an official at the board of foreign trade said.



Alan Greenspan

Greenspan warns against banking protectionism

CHICAGO (AP) — Closing the United States to competition from foreign banks would be ineffective and would prompt retaliation against U.S. banks, Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan told a congressional panel Monday.

U.S. banks need reduced regulation, not protection from overseas financial institutions, to compete in a rapidly changing international marketplace, Greenspan and other witnesses told a subcommittee of the house banking, finance and urban affairs committee.

"It would clearly be counterproductive to close our markets to foreign competition merely because foreign markets are less open than we like," Greenspan testified. "Such an action would invite retaliation and would not be very effective in any case."

Greenspan said foreign companies simply would funnel their transactions through offshore banks that continue to do business in the United States. He also said removing the competition of foreign banks would reduce the pressure to update banking regulations, thereby delaying needed changes and harming U.S. banks.

The subcommittee was meeting in Chicago to assess the competitiveness of U.S. banks against their Far East counterparts. But witnesses also said the nation's banks soon could face stiff international competition from European banks.

By Jan. 1, 1993, European countries plan to eliminate many internal trade barriers, forming a market the subcommittee's witnesses said would surpass the United States in size and wealth.

Some witnesses criticised U.S. regulations that bar banks from certain lines of business. They said these regulations make it more expensive for banks to attract deposits. That, in turn, limits the ability of U.S. banks to compete against foreign banks that are faced with fewer restrictions, the witnesses said.

"We believe the system now hampers the ability of our financial institutions to effectively compete in the marketplace," said L. William Seidman, chairman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. "It's hard to think of what more we can do to handicap our banks."

But Greenspan said the nation's low saving rate also hampers the competitiveness of U.S. banks in foreign markets by lowering the amount of money available to banks to loan.

Committee members and speakers disagreed on what steps would strengthen U.S. banks' ability to compete overseas.

Abu Dhabi to supply Yemen with crude oil

DUBAI (R) — Abu Dhabi, the biggest oil producer in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), will supply 100,000 tonnes per month, 25,000 barrels per day (bpd), of crude to North Yemen in the July-December period, oil industry sources said.

They said the crude will be processed in Aden's refinery in South Yemen to make up for dwindling Soviet crude supplies.

Socialist South Yemen and its neighbour in the North are expected to announce the merger of their two countries at the end of this month.

The agreement was signed in Abu Dhabi Monday between senior officials of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) and a visiting North Yemen oil delegation, the sources said.

"The agreement should be seen in the perspective of Arab brotherhood," one oil industry executive said. He said the crude oil would most probably be used for domestic refined products consumption needs of the united Yemen.

Both North and South Yemen are oil producers.

The Soviet Union for several years has supplied around 50,000 bpd of crude to South Yemen to be processed at the Aden refinery as there is no pipeline linking South Yemen's Shabwa oil field to the refinery. Oil is trucked to the refinery. Oil is trucked to Aden from Shabwa at a rate of

15,000 bpd.

Sources said although the Soviet-South Yemen crude supply agreement runs until the end of this year, Moscow has reduced supplies. The new level of Soviet oil imports was unavailable.

Oil industry sources said the oil supplied by Abu Dhabi will most probably be sold on deferred payment basis and the agreement might be extended when it expires in December.

Sources said the agreement would probably not put extra strain on the UAE's pledge to cut 200,000 bpd of its crude output in the May-July period from its declared 2.1 million bpd output in April.

"The UAE hopes to get a higher output limit at the OPEC (Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries) meeting at the end of July and the agreement to supply crude to North Yemen does not start before July anyway," one oil industry source said.

The UAE rejects its 1.095 million bpd OPEC output quota on the grounds that it is too small for its needs. It keeps its output around two million bpd, 1.6 million of which is produced by Abu Dhabi.

Both Yemens hope to boost oil production in the coming years. The estimated combined crude reserves of both total around 4.75 billion barrels.

Romania's economy plunges into disarray

24-year reign.

Imports from the "socialist countries" were down by 26 per cent, while exports to this bloc were down to 68 per cent of the April 1989 figure.

Exports to Western countries fared even worse at 51 per cent of the year ago performance, but this was partly accounted for by a reduction in exports of foodstuffs and petroleum products needed at home.

Only percentages were issued Monday, but previously published annual figures for 1989 recorded exports to the socialist countries of 4.64 billion Soviet rubles (\$7.8 billion) against imports of 5.13 billion rubles (\$8.6 billion), and hard currency reserves of \$5.99 billion, against imports of \$3.47 billion.

The good news for Romania's 23 million people was that sales of consumer goods rose 18 per cent overall on the year-ago figures.

This figure was mainly accounted for by raw materials and consumer goods for a country where shortages and rationing had become a way of life.

The statistics commission mentioned imports during April of meat, frozen fish, edible oil, dairy products, rice and citrus fruit, but gave no figures.

Most of these products were unavailable during Ceausescu's

23 million people was that sales of consumer goods rose 18 per cent overall on the year-ago figures.

ECONOMY NEWS IN BRIEF

Iran oil minister delays visit

KUWAIT (R) — Iranian Oil Minister Gholamreza Aqazadeh has indefinitely postponed a visit to Kuwait which was due to start Tuesday, an Iranian embassy spokesman in Kuwait said Tuesday.

"He postponed [the visit] to another time due to unexpected business," the spokesman told Reuters without giving details.

Gulf oil officials have said that Aqazadeh was due to discuss oil market conditions with his Kuwaiti counterpart, Sheikh Ali Khalifa Al-Sabah, following the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries' (OPEC) recent pact to cut output and raise prices. Tehran said this week it wanted oil prices to be "much higher" than their present levels, but Sheikh Ali is a strong advocate of a freeze of OPEC's reference price of \$18 a barrel for at least another three years. A Kuwaiti official told Reuters that Aqazadeh and Sheikh Ali were looking for a new date for the rare visit that was agreed earlier this month. The official said the postponement was at the request of Aqazadeh who was holding talks with visiting oil minister of non-OPEC Oman Said Al-Shanfari. "The visit is still on and a new date will be fixed," he said.

Australian sheep held up at Suez Canal

CAIRO (R) — A shipload of 17,000 live Australian sheep, rejected as diseased by Saudi Arabia last week, is being prevented from passing through the Suez Canal, an Australian official said Tuesday. "We are trying to convince the Egyptian authorities that the sheep do not represent a threat. But we understand their concern," he told Reuters. The Saudis said the sheep had viral

dermatitis, also known as scabby mouth disease. Australian officials say the disease is classified by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as non-notifiable and is not considered a threat. The 17,000 sheep are now waiting in international waters outside the canal aboard the Arwa, a ship owned by the Saudi Livestock and Trading Company. A company official declined to say what their final destination was. Last year Saudi Arabia rejected shipments of more than 400,000 Australian sheep, claiming they were infected with different diseases. Australia suspended shipments for four months in response.

Libya cuts oil output

NICOSIA (R) — Libya said Tuesday it had cut oil output by 100,000 barrels a day (bpd), more than the amount requested under this month's OPEC pact. OPEC delegates wanted a reduction of 77,000 bpd in line with their agreement for total cuts of 1.445 million bpd to bring output down to around 22 million.

"Following the recent OPEC agreement, the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya had decided to cut its production by 100,000 bpd with effect from May 4," a Libyan oil ministry official said via telex sent to Reuters from Tripoli. He said 75 per cent of the cut would come from the giant ES Sider field, 15,000 bpd from Sarir and 5,000 bpd each from Amus and Bu Attifel fields.

Lot orders Boeing planes

WARSAW (R) — Poland's national carrier LOT has ordered five U.S. Boeing 757-300 medium-range aircraft and 10 short-haul airliners from the Franco-Italian group Avions de Transport Regional (ATR), the official news agency PAP reported. PAP said Monday the five 269-seat Boeing would be delivered between 1994 and 1996, but did not put a value on the order.

Losing MFN status would hurt China

PEKING (R) — China will lose \$10 billion in exports to the United States if Washington revokes its preferential trade status, a Chinese trade official said Tuesday.

Shen Jieren, a deputy foreign-trade minister, also warned that withdrawing the trade status might backfire by reducing U.S. exports to China and jeopardising China's fragile policy of opening itself to the outside world.

"We hope it doesn't happen, but if it did, it would have a very big impact on Chinese exports," he told a news conference.

"Both Chinese and Hong Kong exports would be affected," he added. The United States last year was China's biggest export market at \$12 billion, according to U.S. statistics.

President George Bush has come under pressure in the United States to scrap China's most-favoured-nation status by June 3 in protest against Peking's bloody crackdown on dissent nearly a year ago.

The original preference agreement was reciprocal, Shen said. "If the United States withdraws this kind of treatment, China will do the same," he said.

China's MFN status gives it the lowest possible tariffs on exports to the U.S. market. Main Chinese exports to the United States include textiles, electronics and toys.

Shen said the \$10 billion he believed China stood to lose did not include a likely ripple effect in unemployment and loss of technology that the country would suffer.

He did not explain how he reached the figure of 10 billion and did not specify a period of time over which the exports would be lost. China last year had a \$6.2 billion trade surplus with the United States, according to U.S. statistics.

The United States has enjoyed benefits from giving China preferential status, Shen said.

"Consumers can enjoy low prices, farmers can sell us their grain and manufacturers can sell their products to the Chinese market," he said.

Earlier this year China launched

AMMAN EXCHANGE RATES

Tuesday, May 15, 1990

Central Bank official rates

	Buy	Sell	
U.S. dollar	667.0	671.0	Japanese yen (for 100)
French Franc	1120.3	1127.0	441.2 443.8
Deutschmark	405.2	407.6	Dutch guilder 360.6 362.8
Swiss franc	478.0	480.9	Swedish crown 111.6 113.8
French franc	120.2	120.9	Italian lire 551 554

Belgian franc (for 10) 196.2 197.4

Earlier this year China launched

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at midsession on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

One Sterling	1.6862/72	U.S. dollar
One U.S. dollar	1.1770/80	Canadian dollar
	1.6438/45	Deutschemarks
	1.8470/80	Dutch guilders
	1.3925/35	Swiss francs
	33.96/34.01	Belgian francs
	5.5325/75	French francs
	1207/1208	Italian lire
	150.60/70	Japanese yen
	5.9985/6.0035	Swedish crowns
	6.5885/6.9355	Norwegian crowns
	6.2635/85	Danish crowns
One ounce of gold	366.80/367.30	U.S. dollars

Earlier this year China launched

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

TOKYO — Tokyo stocks closed easier as arbitrageurs unwound long stock-index positions. The Nikkei Index was down 45.61 points to 32,997.04.

SYDNEY — Australia's sharemarket closed weaker in lacklustre trade, losing ground in early profit taking. The all Ordinaries Index was 9.4 points off at 1507.8.

HONG KONG — Market talk that Chinese official Xu Jiatun wrote a protest letter to China's top leader Deng Xiaoping led stocks to end weak. The Hang Seng fell 11.35 points to 2,965.09.

SINGAPORE — The stock market closed on a weaker note as prices succumbed to profit-taking after recent strong gains. The Straits Times Industrial Index was 5.21 points down at 1,530.86.

BOMBAY — Share prices recovered Monday's losses on hopes that some relief to industry would be given when the 1990/91 budget comes for debate in parliament Wednesday. The Bombay Stock Exchange Index rose 12.15 points to 786.90.

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Manila to end current accord on U.S. bases

MANILA (R) — The Philippines Tuesday formally notified the United States it would terminate its current military bases agreement next year, but left the door open for a new accord.

Philippine spokesman Rafael Alunan said the United States was told the present 25-year agreement on the bases could not be extended.

"With regard to negotiations for a new treaty, we are open for suggestions," he told a news conference.

The United States and the Philippines began exploratory talks on the future of the largest overseas American military facilities Monday. The United States is seeking a new agreement that will enable the bases to remain into the next century.

U.S. spokesman Stanley Schrager said he did not regard the formal termination notice as meaning the United States would abandon its giant bases at Clark and Subic, used to defend the Indian Ocean and Pacific Ocean regions.

But Alunan said during the same briefing that the termination notice implied U.S. withdrawal from the bases unless a new pact was in place.

Schrager said he hoped the exploratory talks on the bases would not last more than a week, and would set the stage for formal negotiations.

He said there was a disagreement over when the current agreement expired, with the Philippines arguing it ended on Sept. 16, 1991, and the U.S. insisting it ended one year later.

But he said the United States hoped to avoid a confrontation over the date.

The notice of termination is required if the agreement is not extended. President Corazon Aquino had previously said it would end next September. Aquino did not explain why the date had been brought forward.

"Today, 15 May, 1990, marks an historic moment for all Filipinos. We have taken that first step in terminating an agreement that was executed in 1947 during the days of lingering U.S. colonialism

in the Philippines," Alunan declared.

It signalled Philippine resolve "to chart a new and truly independent course in which all dealings with foreign governments shall uphold the dignity and sovereignty of the Philippines," he added.

U.S. officials said security around the bases would be high on the talks' agenda following the killing of two U.S. airmen near Clark Air Base Sunday by Communist guerrillas.

Police in Olongapo, west of Manila, said a retired American serviceman was stabbed by an unknown assailant near Subic Bay Naval Base Monday evening. His condition was not known.

Aquino said Monday as the exploratory talks opened that the Philippine government was taking all necessary measures to protect the 40,000 American military personnel and their dependants in the country.

But she said, "we cannot guarantee a 100 per cent fail-safe protection. No government can."

At least 10 Americans have been killed by Communist New People's Army guerrillas in the Philippines since 1987.

Attacker arrested

Police arrested an alleged drug addict who has confessed to stabbing the retired American serviceman, a police spokesman said Tuesday.

He said the man confessed after his arrest to attacking American Richard Rhodes outside a bar in Olongapo City shortly before midnight Monday.

He said there was no indication the attack was politically motivated or related to exploratory talks in Manila on the future of U.S. military bases in the country.

Witnesses described the 26-year-old alleged assailant as "not in his right senses."

Chamorro pleads for \$300m U.S. aid

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nicaraguan President Violeta Chamorro sent an urgent plea to President George Bush saying her country desperately needs the \$300-million in U.S. aid that is bogged down in Congress, the White House said.

President spokesman Martin Fitzwater said Bush, in response to Mrs. Chamorro's cable, called House Speaker Thomas Foley to reiterate his unhappiness with Congress' slow pace on the bill.

"The president expressed to the speaker his strong feelings that Congress has toyed with this bill and has ignored the real problems in Panama and Nicaragua," Fitzwater said.

He said Foley told Bush he would "do his best" to move the legislation.

World population to increase faster than ever in 1990s

LONDON (AP) — World population, now 5.3 billion, will increase faster than ever in the 1990s and could almost triple in 100 years with catastrophic environmental consequences, the annual U.N. population report said Tuesday.

"The next 10 years will decide the shape of the 21st century. They may decide the future of the Earth as a habitation for humans," said Dr. Nafis Sadik, executive director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF).

Every year during the 1990s, the population will increase by 90 to 100 million people, roughly equivalent to the current population of Eastern Europe or Central America, the report said.

Over the decade, a billion more people will inhabit the planet, equivalent to an extra China, it said.

"The 1990s will see faster increases in human numbers than any decade in history," Mrs. Sadik told a news conference to issue the fund's report.

"The choices of the next 10 years... will decide whether world population trebles or merely doubles before it finally stops growing. They will decide whether the pace of damage to the environment speeds up or slows down," she said.

World population growth continues to be grossly out of balance, with 90 per cent of the increase in developing countries, and the biggest growth in the poorest of them, said the state of world population 1990 report.

"At the start of the 1990s the choice must be to act decisively to

Rebels claim killing 2 U.S. airmen

Communist rebels claimed responsibility for the slaying Sunday of the two American airmen and warned that the killings would continue until all U.S. military facilities and troops were "kicked out" of the country.

Jay-Ar Siguia, regional spokesman of the Communist New People's Army, made the claim in a signed statement sent by courier Tuesday to the Associated Press.

Siguia said the American servicemen were "punished" because American troops, Central Intelligence Agents (CIA) and other U.S. spies have increasingly participated in the government's counter-insurgency campaign.

Siguia also claimed that U.S. troops participated in the interrogation of suspected guerrillas. He said two guerrillas were tortured and injected with truth serum by their interrogators, resulting in one of them going insane.

The rebel spokesman also claimed that American soldiers have committed "countless abuses" against Filipino base workers, Filipino women and slum dwellers living near the bases.

It's a small sign of fast-changing times in which military competition is lessening and new symbols of superpower cooperation are replacing cold war confrontation.

A Soviet SS-20 and an American Pershing 2 — minus their nuclear warheads — will be displayed at the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum. They'll stand in the milestones of Flight Gallery, amid such aviation icons as the 1903 Wright Brothers original flier, the Spirit of St. Louis and a replica of Sputnik 1, the Soviet satellite that was the first man-made object placed in Earth's orbit.

In a separate development, helicopter gunships and light bomber aircraft pounded a Communist guerrilla camp in the central Philippines killing 63 rebels, the military said Tuesday.

Area Commander Brigadier General Vicente Garcia said one soldier was killed in Monday's assault in the mountains of Hilongos municipality on Leyte Island, 500 kilometres southeast of Manila.

Garcia told reporters the casualty figures were based on a body count. The toll could not be independently verified.

Troops assaulted the rebel camp after the aerial bombardment, the military said.

The casualty toll was one of the highest this year inflicted on the New People's Army.

enough troubles taking over from a Communist regime, making all the adjustments in management, policy and philosophy, without having to also face the fact that the people are very much in need of this support and aid in terms of everything from food, clothing, housing, all sorts of things," Fitzwater said.

Fitzwater called congressional delay on the measure "outrageous" and accused Congress of turning its back on "people with a real crying need."

"Let's get it down here and get on with the task," Fitzwater said.

In her cable to Bush, Chamorro "lays out a very humanitarian plea," Fitzwater said.

"This democracy is having

promoted the one-child family, Mrs. Sadik said family size still increased from 2.3 to 2.5, partly because of the age structure of the population and rural couples having more children.

"If fertility reductions continue to be slower than projected, the mark could be missed yet again. In that case the world could be headed towards an eventual total of up to 14 billion people," she said.

Asked about the effect on population growth of Pope John Paul II's speeches against artificial birth control during his Third World travels, Mrs. Sadik said: "When the Pope visits some African countries and some Latin American countries, I think there is a reaction."

She noted that even the Pope had promoted "responsible parenthood," but he advocated the most difficult method "to get universal acceptance for" — abstinence.

Only six years ago, the report said, population growth appeared to be slowing everywhere except Africa and parts of South Asia and world population seemed likely to stabilise around 10.2 billion towards the end of the next century.

"Today, the situation looks promising," it said. "Progress in reducing fertility rates has been slower than expected."

According to the latest U.N. projections, the report said, the world has overshot the 1984 targets and is now on course for a final stable total nearer 11 billion than 10 billion.

In 15 countries, 13 of them in Africa, birth rates rose between the early 1960s and 1980s and in 23 more countries, they fell by less than 2 per cent, it said.

In China, the world's most populous nation, which has

Missile swap — a sign of post-cold war times

WASHINGTON (AP)

The superpowers are about to commit an act they've tried mightily to avoid throughout 45 years of cold war: an intercontinental nuclear exchange.

This one, though, will be friendly.

Nuclear missiles of the type the United States and the Soviet Union had aimed across the East-West divide — but are now withdrawing — are to be propped up, painted and polished, side by side, in museums in Washington and Moscow.

It's a small sign of fast-changing times in which military competition is lessening and new symbols of superpower cooperation are replacing cold war confrontation.

A Soviet SS-20 and an American Pershing 2 — minus their nuclear warheads — will be displayed at the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum.

They'll stand in the milestones of Flight Gallery, amid such aviation icons as the 1903 Wright Brothers original flier, the Spirit of St. Louis and a replica of Sputnik 1, the Soviet satellite that was the first man-made object placed in Earth's orbit.

In a separate exhibit in the museum's space hall will display pictures of the missiles; copies of the intermediate-range nuclear forces, or INF, treaty, which governs destruction of the missiles and their launchers, and chunks of destroyed INF missiles.

The Space Hall exhibit will be titled "Do Veri, No Pro Veri."

The Russian proverb, meaning "trust, but verify," was then-President Reagan's favourite way of describing the central message of the INF treaty he signed on Dec. 7, 1987.

The exhibit opens on June 20. A similar display is due to open at Moscow's Central Armed Forces Museum, the city's main military museum, sometime this summer.

On Thursday, a team of American officials will arrive in Moscow to swap a disarmed Pershing 2 for the SS-20 that will be shipped in five pieces to the Smithsonian. Later this month, Soviet technicians are to fly to Washington to assemble the SS-20, whose 16.5-metre length will barely fit inside the museum. The slender, lighter, faster and more modern Pershing 2 is 10 metres long.

Smithsonian officials had wanted the missiles in place by the time Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev arrived in Washington on May 30 for a summit meeting with President George Bush, said Gregg Herken, chairman of the museum's Space History Department.

But bureaucratic obstacles set back the original schedule, and Herken said it was not certain whether the exhibit would be finished before Gorbachev leaves on June 3.

"It's possible we'll be assembling the SS-20 here while the summit is going on," he said, adding that it will be the first Soviet missile ever displayed at the Smithsonian.

Herken acknowledged that the exhibit is a departure from the Air and Space Museum's usual practice of showcasing peaceful advances in technology and human accomplishment. He said the museum wanted to commemorate not the missiles themselves but the landmark agreement that brought about their destruction.

"That is an icon of human achievement," he said.

Asked about the effect on population growth of Pope John Paul II's speeches against artificial birth control during his Third World travels, Mrs. Sadik said: "When the Pope visits some African countries and some Latin American countries, I think there is a reaction."

She noted that even the Pope had promoted "responsible parenthood," but he advocated the most difficult method "to get universal acceptance for" — abstinence.

The SS-20 is the main Soviet missile being destroyed under terms of the INF treaty, which banned all U.S. and Soviet land-based nuclear missiles with ranges of 310 to 3,140 miles (500 to 5,000 kilometres). The American missiles in this category are the Pershing 2 and Tomahawk ground-launched cruise missiles deployed in five European NATO countries.

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Rebel victory should accelerate Angola peace process — Savimbi

MAVINGA, Angola (AP) — Guerrilla leader Jonas Savimbi said his forces' stand against a government offensive marked the rebels' biggest battlefield victory and would speed up efforts to end the 15-year civil war.

UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola) halted the 137-day offensive between the two sides since Savimbi and Angolan President Jose Eduardo Dos Santos agreed last June to a ceasefire at a summit in neighbouring Zaire. The ceasefire collapsed within days.

Savimbi said up to 12,000 guerrillas and 10,000 government troops were involved in the fighting around Mavinga, that ended on May 7.

The government has denied its forces were beaten, saying they decided to leave Mavinga because it was no longer strategically important.

UNITA said the government forces ran out of food and water and were forced to retreat.

More than 1,000 government soldiers were killed, according to UNITA. The rebels declined to give their own casualty figures, but acknowledged the loss of six high-ranking commanders.

The Angolan government has said some 500 soldiers on each side died at Mavinga.

The burned-out remains of more than two dozen government military vehicles, including tanks, armoured personnel carriers and supply trucks, were strewn at a battle site about 10 kilometres outside Mavinga.

UNITA said it has salvaged dozens of additional vehicles left

three weeks at a time and placed set by Portuguese officials.

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